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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003997

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DEPT PLEASE PASS USAID  
DEPT FOR ECA/A/E/EUR, ECA/A/E/NEA, EUR/PPD, NEA/PD/IRAO,  
NEA/I, EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KPAO FAID SCUL IZ TU

SUBJECT: TURKMEN GROUP, HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY SEEK U.S.

SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC OUTREACH

REF: ANKARA 3144

¶11. This is an action request for the Department, USAID, and Embassy Baghdad--please see para. 9.

¶12. Summary: The Iraqi Turkmen Assembly and Hacettepe University are seeking U.S. assistance for a distance learning project for students in Kirkuk to take classes from Hacettepe. This is the first step in their plan to bring students from Kirkuk to Turkey and the U.S., and eventually to build a brick-and-mortar university in Kirkuk. They have asked for up to \$3.5 million in U.S. assistance (or direct grants of equipment) for the distance learning project. Embassy seeks Washington's support for the project. End summary.

¶13. PAO and PolMilOff met June 14 with Iraqi Turkmen Assembly (ITA) leaders Umit Akkoyunlu and Vijdan Terzy as well as the Dean of Hacettepe University's Engineering School, Selcuk Gecim, and Engineering Professor Üner Colak. They briefed us on the ITA and Hacettepe's joint desire to set up a partnership with students in Kirkuk, with an eye toward eventually bringing students to Hacettepe University--and perhaps also the United States--to study. As a preliminary measure, Hacettepe and ITA would like to offer distance learning courses (in English) to students in Kirkuk. They emphasized that this program would be open to all Kirkukis regardless of ethnic or religious background.

¶14. Our interlocutors said their eventual goal was to build a brick and mortar university with a medical school and teaching hospital in Kirkuk, but they wish to start first with the distance learning program, and subsequently bring students to Turkey and/or the United States. Distance learning would be offered in Kirkuk (as early as Oct. 2005) at minimal cost and Hacettepe University would administer the program. The university officials said they have compiled a list of costs for various components (computers, satellite Internet connection, course materials) and asked for USG assistance. They added that the GOT has also expressed an interest in assisting. PAO asked that Hacettepe provide us their plans so we can follow up with Washington.

¶15. When conditions warrant, Hacettepe would also like to invite Iraqi students to Turkey to study (while some of Hacettepe's programs are in English--as will be the distance learning courses--students would need competence in Turkish to participate in this program), but also with a U.S. component. Hacettepe currently has an agreement with the State University of New York, under which Turkish students attend their first and third years at Hacettepe and their second and fourth years at SUNY. Dean Gecim hoped that perhaps Hacettepe could offer a similar program for Iraqi students, but added that U.S. assistance would be needed.

¶16. PAO noted that both of these ideas had merit and that the USG appreciates both the ITA and Hacettepe's initiative. But he added that he could not commit to funding, particularly for bringing students to Turkey. The USG's main program for students was the Fulbright program, but it did not appear that this plan would fit into Fulbright. Nonetheless, the Embassy will look into possible U.S. funding sources.

¶17. On June 20, Akkoyunlu, Terzy, and Gecim presented PolMilOff with their proposal and funding request for the distance learning program. PolMilOff undertook to forward the proposal to Washington for guidance. Dean Gecim noted that Hacettepe would be happy (indeed would prefer) to accept in-kind donations (for example, computers) instead of money, but would happily accept either. We note that the proposal may not have enough information for Washington to evaluate; Gecim noted to us that there is a more fulsome presentation in Turkish he can translate and provide to us.

¶18. BEGIN TEXT OF PROPOSAL

20.06.2005

Joint cooperation between Hacettepe University and the

## Turkmen Assembly on establishing Kirkuk University

For the aim of an actual and realistic participation in the Rebuilding and Reconstruction of Iraq and in the framework of the Protocol reached between Hacettepe University and The Turkmen Assembly regarding the joint cooperation on student/postgraduate and academic personal exchange programme, Both parties decided on the following;

Starting a joint graduate education programme between Hacettepe University, the State University of New York (SUNY) and Kirkuk University for Iraqi students. The students will be accepted through defined criteria and start their first year at Hacettepe University including English language programmes for beginners. Financial assistance may be very beneficial to support students through a scholarship.

- The foundation of a medical school associated with an educational and research hospital within Kirkuk University campus as the first step of this University. Education shall be in English language.

- Starting a distance education programme transmitted from Hacettepe University to Kirkuk University starting with four disciplines, plus computer and English language programmes.

The following framework was prepared based on four concurrent educational programs to be realized during the first phase. Data and video will be broadcasted by a dedicated line through the satellite transmission.

### A) System Definition

#### Item and Estimated Cost (all U.S. dollars)

Ankara: two e-classrooms, system room, studio: \$1,200,000

Kirkuk: three e-classroom, e-library, computer lab, system room: \$1,300,000

### B) Miscellaneous items

#### Item and Estimated Cost

Distance education packages (business and management, information technologies) (annual lease): \$200,000

Data transmission through satellite (annual lease): \$200,000

Annual cost for the coursework administered by Hacettepe University: \$300,000

Security and system support, administration, operation and maintenance cost: \$300,000

ESTIMATED TOTAL COST: \$3,500,000

The Turkmen Assembly  
Chairman

Prof. Dr. Umit Akkoyunlu

END TEXT

19. Action Request and Comment: Hacettepe University is a prestigious Turkish educational institution. While we defer to our colleagues in Iraq on the bona fides of the Iraqi Turkmen Assembly there (reftel), here in Ankara the organization has presented us with what could be a feasible, reasonable plan to offer educational opportunities to the people of Kirkuk. Additionally, this proposal is a tangible effort by the GOT (Hacettepe is a public university) to continue its positive outreach to Iraq. We ask that Washington and Baghdad review the proposal in para. 8 favorably. One possibility we see would be for USAID to fund the equipment needs outlined in para. 8, while ECA might consider financial assistance for the Iraqi students who would come to the U.S. End Action Request and Comment.

110. REOs Kirkuk and Mosul minimize considered.

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